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Home Site of Isaac Cuthbert Collier now Piedmont Park? – Maybe!

JULY 15, 2015 3:58 PM \ 1 COMMENT \ BY COLLIERHERITAGE \ [EDIT](#)



Home of Isaac Cuthbert and Sara Means Collier, Piedmont, Georgia

The back of this photo bears the following note:

“The home of Isaac Cuthbert Collier and Sara Means Collier back in the early 70’s” (meaning 1870’s) “where J. C. Collier resided until he was thirteen years old, the front porch being torn away, now used as cattle barn. Photo taken Dec. 12, 1943”

The home site was in the community of Piedmont, next to the dry goods store and cotton gin owned by IC Collier and within his 3000-acre farm. Over the years, all the land of the farm was sold away except one acre where the store and gin stood with the home site immediately adjacent. None of the

buildings are there today.

In May 2015, the following letter was presented to the Lamar County Board of Commissioners.

To: Mr. Bob Zellner, Lamar County Administrator
and the Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Date: May 18, 2015

I am grateful for the opportunity to submit this proposal to you on behalf of the Estate of Virginia Collier Dennis and in my position as Executor of that Estate.

I am proposing to donate an asset of that Estate, in the form of a one-acre tract of land, to Lamar County. The donation is offered with no strings attached, but with the hope the County would see fit to utilize it as a rural, roadside park in recognition of, and as memorial to, one of the most important communities in the early history of Lamar County. I believe an informative marker would also be fitting. The tract is in the community of Piedmont. I have provided aerial photographs showing the property.

The Colliers were a prominent family in the area south of The Rock as far back as the mid-1820s. Later, Collier farms were established north of The Rock. Isaac Cuthbert (I. C.) Collier was a Confederate soldier who was one of the largest cotton planters in middle Georgia. The acreage held by him and his son, Jena Cuthbert (J. C.) Collier, totaled about 3,000 acres along Big and Little Potato Creeks at the time of I. C.'s death in 1908.

The community of Piedmont was located on the Old Alabama Road, a former Indian trail that became the main route from Augusta, Georgia to Union Springs, Alabama. J. C. Collier's personal papers document his recollection of the stage coaches, stage stations, and freight haulers along the road during the years of his boyhood after the War Between the States.

Piedmont was surrounded by the farm of I. C. and J. C. Collier. "Cotton was king" and the community boasted a cotton gin, dry goods store, blacksmith shop, railroad depot, a school, two churches, and "daily mail". I don't have earlier information but the population was over 300 in the 1920s.

J. C., born in 1866, was a successful dry goods merchant and, along with his father, founded Oxford Knitting Mills in Barnesville. When his father passed away, J. C. took over operations of the farm. J. C., a Mayor of Barnesville, applied organization and accountability to his cotton farming - two things that served him well as a business man and politician.

J. C. Collier was a strong supporter for the formation of Lamar County. Documents from the Estate have been donated to the Old Jail Museum that show his prominent role in campaigning for the new county. Ultimately, the boundaries of Lamar County were drawn to include the Piedmont community. In 1924, J. C. Collier, originally from Piedmont, was elected the first State Senator from Lamar County, representing Lamar, Bibb, Monroe, and Pike Counties.

In 1924, the Colliers sold their textile enterprises to the William Carter Company. The same year, J. C. and his son, Durward Cuthbert (D. C.), began looking at developing Piedmont into an industrial complex. They hired investigations of the area's engineering, transportation, and natural resources. D. C. toured Europe, studying textile mills and soliciting support for the venture. The primary focus was on construction of a "new silk" or rayon mill. Documents show sincere interest from companies in Holland, France, and Italy and the future for Piedmont looked tremendously promising. The vision was brought to a halt by the Great Depression. Correspondence shows D. C. encountered formerly interested investors who were reduced to selling apples on the streets of New York City. Through the Great Depression and into World War II, the Piedmont community declined, never reaching the height of its past.

J. C. Collier died in 1944. Over the years, the Collier land holdings at Piedmont were divided and sold. Virginia Collier Dennis, granddaughter of J. C. Collier, retained a single acre of the Piedmont land, which was the site of the store of I. C. and J. C. Collier. She kept it in memory of her ancestors and the Piedmont community. It was a community that was important in the founding of Lamar County, even affecting the County's shape. Piedmont figured into the early financial development of Barnesville and was the early home of the first State Senator from Lamar County.

The setting of the one-acre tract is peaceful with large trees forming a canopy over some remnant beds of jonquils or daffodils. When I was there in March of this year, I noted the adjacent highway, which follows the historic Old Alabama Road, is the route used by the growing bicycling community. J. C.'s former home, purchased by him before 1890, is still standing across the road from the one-acre tract.

I sincerely hope the County accepts this gift. This is a one-time opportunity to secure this property and preserve Piedmont's history as Lamar County's centennial approaches.

Sincerely,



Glen A. Collier
Nacogdoches, Texas

In June 2015, the Commissioners voted to accept the donation. The site lies about four miles north of The Rock on Piedmont Road.



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One Thought on “Home Site of Isaac Cuthbert Collier now Piedmont Park? – Maybe!”



Elaine

on [July 15, 2015 at 5:09 pm](#) said:

[Edit](#)

Dear Glen, I am delighted and impressed by the land donation and the Commissioners response. That's great news. Good work.

Cousin Elaine Collier Neal

[Reply↓](#)